



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 13, 2008

**ORTING MAN SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS IN PRISON FOR BLOWING UP
POLICE CRUISER WITH PIPE BOMB**

Defendant Bragged to Others About Blast with Powerful Device

TERRY ALAN OVERTON, 42, of Spanaway, Washington, was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in Tacoma for Possession of an Unregistered Firearm (Destructive Device) and Destruction of Property by Use of Explosive. OVERTON pleaded guilty in March 2008. He was sentenced today to 72 months of imprisonment, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. The term of supervised release will include 200 hours of community service, and OVERTON must pay restitution in the amount of \$4,152. At sentencing, U.S. District Judge Ronald B Leighton commented that law enforcement officers have a difficult job and they do it well under trying circumstances, and told OVERTON that the "fact that you directed this conduct at a police vehicle ... [which has] symbolic meaning to the community, is significant."

According to the plea agreement, in the early morning hours of July 11, 2006, a pipe bomb was used to blow up a marked police cruiser in the parking lot of the Orting Police Department. The pipe bomb was made of 1-1/2-inch galvanized iron pipe. The pipe bomb was so powerful it sent shrapnel up and through the gas tank and trunk, and fragments were blown in all directions relative to the bomb's placement under the vehicle. Investigators with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Orting Police identified OVERTON as a prime suspect. OVERTON had been seen in the hours before the blast with a pipe bomb. Witnesses told investigators that in the hours, days, and weeks after the blast, OVERTON bragged about bombing the police car.

Luckily nobody was injured by the explosion, but the damages to the car were such that it was declared totaled. Amazingly no other police vehicles were damaged by shrapnel from the blast.

At sentencing, Assistant United States Attorney Gregory A. Gruber pointed out the extreme danger posed by OVERTON's pipe bomb, writing to the court "this defendant caused, by his intentional act of destruction, an associated risk of injury or death to numerous people -- the potential victims being any police officer who might have used the targeted car or been in or near any vehicle close by when the bomb detonated, any passerby on the sidewalk or in the street, and any firefighter, EMT, or other emergency personnel responding to the scene." Gruber also argued that OVERTON's apparent motive for the bombing -- his desire to exact revenge for Orting officers' role in sending him to jail for a prior methamphetamine conviction -- was a slap in the face of the criminal justice system and provided another reason for a lengthy sentence.

Judge Leighton agreed, saying that "when a society is bound together by a concept which is as fragile as the rule of law, promoting respect for the law" is hugely important. He also opined that "when we say we're going to punish someone and don't, we erode respect for the law." In

discussing the defendant's prior criminal history, Judge Leighton told OVERTON that "you've been tenacious in working your way up to the federal court; the persistence alone is worthy of note." But the judge also believed that OVERTON had made some improvements in his life since the 2006 offense, and said that was one reason the sentence was not higher than six years.

The case was investigated by ATF and the Orting Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregory A. Gruber.

For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office, at (206) 553-4110.